WINDLESTRAW

BY

PAMELA TENNANT

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To Philip Webb
from Pamela Tennant.
this book of verse & Songs. 1905.

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WINDLESTRAW

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A BOOK OF VERSE

WITH LEGENDS IN RHYME OF
THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS

BY

PAMELA TENNANT

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TO

E. T.

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"A little stream best fits a little boat
A little lead best fits a little float
As my small pipe best fits my little note."

R. HERRICK.

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Yama, runs the Zend legend, was a monarch in that primitive time when sorrow, sickness, and death were unknown. By degrees sin and disease crept into the world, and the old King retired with a chosen band from the polluted earth to a kingdom where he still reigns. Yama was the first man who passed through death into immortality. Having discovered a way to the other world, he obtained for himself a kingdom in it, and the tenth book of the Rig-Veda represents him as guiding men thither. In one verse he is seen feasting under a leafy tree; in others, as enthroned in the innermost Heaven and granting luminous abodes to the pious. Meanwhile the two brown dogs, broad of nostril, and of a hunger never to be satisfied, wander among men, or, like Cerberus, guard the avenue to his palace, along which the departed are exhorted to hurry with all possible speed. "Reverence to Yama, who is Death, to him who first reached the river, lord of the two-footed and four-footed creatures. Worship King Yama, the assembler of men, who departed to the mighty waters spying out a road for many."

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" *Praise Allah for the diversity of his handiwork.*

THE LEGEND OF THE TORTOISE

THERE was a day, as country legends tell
When Blessëd Mary gave in Heaven a feast
And to her board, she loving all things well
Invited insect, reptile, bird, and beast.
To the white halls of Heaven she bid them come
To keep high festival in her great home.

And first the lion of the tawny mane
Came with a reverence in his golden eyes
And all the forest beasts to Heaven's domain
Making obeisance to its sanctities.
The subtle elephant, the sinuous ape
The clarion peacock of the beak agape.

The silver fishes and the myriad flies
The beetle of the shard-back like a shield
The spider with her web's intricacies
The little mice of cupboard church and field
The dappled deer upon a thousand hills
The bird that on the quick snake stamps, and kills.

The crested lark, the pilgrim of the sky
The yaffle and the curlew and the kite
The nightingale, whose hidden rhapsody
Enchants and holds the listening ear of night.
The babbling cuckoo of the double tongue
The lapwing that deceives to shield her young.

Came there the squirrel and the watchman owl
The whistling marmot and the two-toed sloth.
The lean hyæna and the grey sea-fowl
The golden butterfly and silver moth
(Who vowed in Heaven she would do no wrong)
All these and more 'gan Heavenwards to throng.

When they were all assembled at the feast
The Virgin looked around her in the hall
Saying, "I bid ye come from great to least
Hath not the whole creation heard my call?
God's birds and beasts have hastened to appear
Only the shell-backed tortoise is not here."

Answered the eagle, "As I clove the sky
Hitherward flying at thy mild behest
Low on the earth I cast my burning eye
And saw the tortoise on his tardy quest.
Painfully mastering the stubborn soil
Cursing his heavy back in tedious toil.

"'Lift me, O! thou that gazest on the sun'
He cried, 'and bear me for the love of God!
I that must creep, nay, I that fain would run
I, that am earthbound creature of the sod
Must be too late, or never be at all
At Mary's feast in the Celestial Hall.'

"Then I, because of birds I am the chief
Stooped in mine aërial path and lifted him.
Yet not forsooth so much for his relief
As that it pleased me to fulfil a whim.
But he so vexed me with his ugly sprawl
That wearied of his weight, I let him fall."

Then Mary, of the seven times wounded heart
Was filled with sorrow at this careless tale.
She chid the eagle for his cruel part
And bid him seek the tortoise in the vale.
So piece to piece she joined the broken shell
And with her healing hands, she made him well.

Mark how the tortoise now with patterned back
  Bears horny testimony of his fall!
Yet strong and strenuous if on tardy track
  Had he persèvered, he had saved it all.
    Since who wins Heaven must strive for it, nor ask.
    Now God be with us in the blessèd task.

THE GOLDFINCH

I WANDERED hearkening, in an April wood
While all around me in harmonious flood
Rose the clear singing of the brotherhood
Of wing and feather.

Shyly the linnets hid and twittered there
Larks circled upward in the ambient air
Whitethroat and willow-wren and whistling stare
Singing together.

One beyond others in the joyful throng
Piped in the apple trees the whole day long
Crystal in utterance a wind-swift song
Divinely fluted.

Lightly the goldfinch, e'er he lit to sing
Spread the pale yellow of his painted wing
He that bears record of his ministering
In hues transmuted.

His be the praise of the first Lententide!
Seeking the wooden cross where Jesus died
This bird the nail within the hand espied
And tried to ease it.

Lightly he fluttered on a tender wing
Held in a slender beak the cruel thing
Still with a gentle might endeavouring
But to release it.

Then as he strove spake One—a dying space—
"Bear for thy pity as a mark of grace
Semblance of this, My blood, upon thy face
A living glory

So while the generations come and go
While the earth blossoms and the waters flow
Children may honour thee and mankind know
Thy loving story."

Lord! of dominion over man and beast
That out of nothing madest great and least
Thine everlasting praise hath never ceased
From heavenly choir.

Hear even now in these awakening days
Rise from the meadowland and orchard ways
Anthem and madrigal and roundelays
That never tire.

Grant unto us of the untoward will
Holden of utterance, in praise too still
Some of this jouissance our hearts to fill
And our mute voices.

So shalt thou gather in returning Springs
Some mortal knowledge of celestial things
So shall we praise thee in the mind that brings
Life that rejoices.

THE LEGEND OF THE ASS

"WHAT means the mark upon thy back, dear Gris?
I trace it on thy shoulders as I ride
Slender the cross it seems that shadowed is
Even to thy side."

"Well mayst thou ask of me who bear'st this sign
Albeit unseen upon thy tender brow
Are we not signëd with the self-same sign
Even I and thou?

Behold an heritage: and who may know
What mystic virtue the great sign contains?
Where is the hardship of the cruel blow
Of whip and reins?

Nay, when Life's bondage is so harsh and rude
Dawns a far vision that all sorrow calms
We hear the shouting of the multitude
We see the palms—

And all else falls from us. It matters not
If we with suffering keep patient tryst.
We, as a race O child, may share thy lot
We have served Christ."

The grey ass halted in her pattering pace
  High-hoofed and obdurate, sleek-eared and mild
A world of wisdom in a velvet face
  Turned to the child.

"So have we patience. And in fortitude
  Do thou wax stronger as the years pass on
So shalt thou in thine heart, a living rood
  Carry God's Son."

THE LEGEND OF THE SAINTFOIN

"The country-folk do hold this plant to be in very truth the hay that lay in the manger of Bethlehem. And though it were mid-winter, the legend tells, it blossomed red."—*Old Herbal.*

MELCHIOR, Gaspar and Bálthazar
Led aright by the beckoning star
Come where the gazing shepherds are
(I hear a Maid lullaby sing)

Come where the stable's shelter stands
A maiden holds in a mother's hands
A young child wrapt in swaddling bands
(Now hush thee, my heavenly King.)

Joseph, come rede me this thing she said
The hay that lies at my young son's head
Hath blossomed anew as it were not dead
(I hear a Maid lullaby sing)

And he that stood with the feeding kine
Answerëd Mary, thy child divine
Is come, and behold it for a sign
(Now hush thee, my heavenly King.)

Mary, now cradle thy young child low
The night has fallen the great winds blow
And sheep are lost in the driving snow
And many are wandering.

God send we all when he comes our way
May know Christ's coming and bid him stay
May find new life like the Holy Hay
And a soul's awakening.

THE CROWN IMPERIAL

LILIES bear witness when the Christ in sorrow
So great compassion to mankind displayed
One flower's happiness no pain might borrow
Proud in her shining leaves to stand arrayed.

So gazed she upward while the sensate flowers
Hung their sad blossoms for a grief-wrung God.
Fitly compassionate the trees high bowers
Laid themselves prostrate with the wind-sown sod.

Pride hath her penalty, as Love his dower
Earth's warning tremor and the Heaven's frown
Fell disregarded by the froward flower
So Crown Imperial forwent her crown.

(How shall we blame her? We ourselves lie sleeping
Wrapt in oblivion of His pitying smile
Hearts given over to the cold world's keeping
Couldest thou not watch with me a little while?)

Fair stand the lilies, not a white bell hidden
Holding their fragrance to the rain-washed skies.
Yet one among them stands, divinely chidden
The great drops welling to averted eyes.

"'See! how lightly I hold the earth,' saith the stone-crop."

THE STONE-CROP

LORD, who didst fashion my desire to love
Bidding me sojourn thine accepted space
Shouldest thou not once have let me see thy face
So might I closelier compass realms above?
Earth's habitations pass, and I would move
Dwelling more nearly in yon heavenly place
Where griefs inscrutable on earth to trace
Authentic vertues of the spirit prove.

Yea, from things temporal would I decline
Strong in suffisance of a sure content.
Even as the Stone-crop (be her wisdom mine)
The wall's rough fissure her sole tenement.
Holding so lightly her appointed place
As from the stones to lift a radiant face.

THE ALOE

THE Aloe speaks, green votary of Death
Who lives to flower and flowering is her last.
Yet all the virtue of her earthly breath
Gives she to this end heedless of the past.
Look where she leans her beauty to the sky
Reading to blossom, where Man spells, to die.

"For blessed is the wood wherebv righteousness cometh."

THE LEGEND OF THE ASPEN TREE

CHILD, beside the brimming river
Hast thou seen the Aspen quiver?
Shapely leaf on slender stem
Scarce a wind to flutter them.

Yet they shake upon the tree
"Lo! the Cross was made from me."
Twisting to a windless sky
For the fruit of Calvary.

Child, and shall the Aspen tree
Expiate eternally?
Is it well to deem that one
For a sin must yet atone?

Nay, not so. In highest heaven
Shall not souls be sain'd and shriven
That have wrought their rest through pain?
Souls, whose loss hath been their gain?

Of a truth 'tis said, that we
Build anew the bitter tree
Yet the being sacrificed
Doth not bear the form of Christ.

We may stand aside to rail
Plait the thorn, or drive the nail
All the piercëd figure shown
Hath for lineaments, our own.

FLOWERS

I SING how Mary lived on Earth
All in simplicity
To give to God's Son virgin birth
To man, felicity.

And to a name that Heaven adorns
One tribute man has paid
Her path that once was set in thorns
Is now in flowers laid.

For Mary-buds and Lady's Keys
Her Tresses' fragrancy
Our Lady's bedstraw—loved of bees
Heart's-ease and Rose-Mary

And Lady's Smock and Golden Stair
Bright things that know not blame
These children of the meadow, bear
Remembrance of her name.

And fitting praise is this that one
Of such renown in Heaven
From fairest of Earth's store alone
Should have remembrance given.

"And the day shall have a sun
That shall make thee wish it done."

KING SOLOMON AND THE HOOPOES

IT chanced King Solomon pursued his way
Full in the radiance of an Eastern day.
The fierce sun shining in a cloudless sky
Dried the broad rivers with a burning eye.
Wide lay the wilderness of tawny sand
Sublime and measureless, a fiery land.
The very lizards sought the cavern'd rocks
That gave small shelter to the thirsty flocks
And still the sun rode high and skies were bright
"Would God," quoth Solomon, "that it were night."

Even as he uttered it, a sound of wings
Smote on his senses, and even grass-held springs
Sounding in dying ears by thirst distrest
Seem'd not to Solomon a thing more blest.
Full on his brow, and in the path he made
Gently there fell the so desirëd shade.
The skies were hidden and a moving screen
Was drawn the heaven and the earth between.

Amazed the King upglanced, and was aware
Hoopoes were hovering in middle air

Each wing to wing with soft and feathery beat
Winnowed the blue, and cooled the noonday heat
And while they fluttered on a myriad wing
"Brothers," they whispered, "let us shade the King."

Now not alone the Wise One knew all things
To Man 'pertaining, but even whisperings
Alien, of lives into his heart could take
Both with the birds and beasts could answer make.
His was the language of the hill-shed streams
He could discern the hidden world of dreams
Wise as the stars, he held the false and true
And thoughts most mystical, these things he knew.

So re-created by the grateful shade
Courteously speech he to the bird-throng made:
"God knows," quoth Solomon, "I praise the care
So to withhold from me the noon-tide glare.
Brothers, I recompense the service shown
Wear, to thine honour, each a golden crown."

"Great King!" the chief among the Hoopoes cried
"O! be not angry and thy servants chide
But gold makes captive, and shall crowns not vex
Bright though their burden be, our untried necks?
How shall we be so free to fly or sing
If thou take not thy crowns again, O King?"

Withdrew then Solomon his mighty word
Praising the wisdom of the untaught bird:
"Were it not well," quoth he, "if Man might know
Justly the value of a worldly show?
So might he dwell beyond those outward things
That with their weight constrain the spirit's wings."

Forthwith, and mindful of the birds' request
Gave he to one and all, a seemlier crest.
One that may rise or fall as each bird will
Nor tempt with gold the fowler's odious skill.
Even of one nature with the air-borne wing.
So runs the story of the Birds and King.

CAIN AND HIS ANGEL

"When God un-makes but to re-make a soul."

CAIN AND HIS ANGEL

THE Voice of God crieth to all men's hearts:
"Rest ye from labour, and perpetual strife
For I am with you when ye know it not.
Ever am I with you."

But even as Cain
In chosen banishment from Heaven's Peace
And God's unending love, we wander on
And in our blindness weave enduring woe.

And Cain spake:
"How am I to comfort me?
I have no other help but mine own heart
God is no more for me through mine own deed
And I am outcast, utterly alone.

The rocks cry out against me, and the skies
Are iron overhead, and every star
A cold and mocking face of cruelty.
The winds that once would shout across the hills
Bending the tall trees in their flying strength
Now hunt and terrify my soul.

The day
Whose radiance was bright joy to me is now
Most horrible with fear, and struggling dreams
Make sleep a torture and an agony.
The Sea is grey with hate. And all the waves
Drawn back like angry lips in silky hiss
Say Kill him. . . . . .

O! I have slain my heart.
What might may now restore to me my joy
What power denounce my infinite servitude?"

The winds moaned as in weariness
Lifting the sand in wandering fitful gusts.
And the great Angel in whose charge was Cain
Shivered in homelessness, so far from God.

The charge lay heavy on his shining soul
For many years had passed since Cain had raised
The undaunted hand that slaughtered Innocence.
And still the anguished soul roamed far from God

Nor heard the wide-spread wings that covered him.
"For I am with you," saith the Eternal Voice
"Lo! I am with you when ye know it not.
Ever am I with you."

* * * * *

When Abel fell
Beneath the abhorrèd wound to Brotherhood
Upon his blood marking the altar stones
The sunlight fell. And forthwith all unseen
There stood the mighty Angel by Cain's side
That now inexorably must follow him.
Divinely tasked, this mighty Spirit strove
To bring Cain sacred grief of penitence.
Anon to comfort him with times of peace
And turn his hatred to fair love again.

For Angels' hands are cradles to our woes.
Here we may lay them down like infants stilled
In quiet slumber for a little while
Till we must take them to our hearts again.

But Cain's soul was most bitterly afraid.
He felt the unseen Presence at his side
Outcome and spirit of the deed he wrought
Nor knew it for an angel.

The night fell
And bowed with burdening grief of unshed tears

Cain took his way across the moonlit sands.
Peace came not to his limbs, he could not rest
The starry silence mocked and tortured him.
Ever he saw those great eyes wide with pain
The writhing body and the outstretched hand
That strove too late to ward the insensate blow.

The staggering form rose large before his eyes
And he must wander to be rid of it.
"Abel! O have ye no compassion now?
Ye that have honour in the shadowy grave
That ever ye must rise, and follow me?
Nay! get thee gone," he cried, as with raised hands
He fled in agony across the plain.

The Angel opened his wide wings to shield
The flying form that could elude him not.
And with his hands bare Cain upon the Earth
As he sped swiftly.

* * * * *

And Morning laid her radiance on the hills.
The dawn winds brought the freshness of the sea
And birds flew over in the opal skies
And wild beasts sought the shelter of their caves.
But Cain with his great Angel by his side
Suffered and strove, with none to comfort him.

Yet was his Angel with him . . .
Through the day
Those strong hands held him; and insistent eyes
Were turned on his in longing guardianship.
The starry nights were filled with plenitude
Of murmuring tones, and the ineffable stir
Of winged companionship.

But Cain's ears holden by a selfish woe
By huge self-pity for departed Peace
Heard not the measure of the virtual sound
Of God's voice in the Angel of his deed.
For on the threshold of the heart Truth stands
Till we, on the inner side unbar the door.

God speaks in thunders and in murmurings
Making strong Angels of our bitter needs.
Who minister to us crying aloud
O! follow for we seek the Immutable.
And all our passionate grasp of semblances
And our insatiate thirst for better things
Are their far voices echoing down the void
Of vast, illimitable, unbounded space.
Then grant us understanding, that we live.

But Cain knew not his Angel. Till it chanced
That guided by the spirit of his deed
He sought the altar Abel's hands had raised
His very pain, God's mercy.

There on the ground, dispersed and overgrown
With flowers and weeds in a bewildering growth
He found the stones.

Then did the tried heart break
And crouching low, in deep abandonment
The floods of sorrow washed his inmost soul.

Like leaping cataracts once more set free
From Winter's ice, by Spring too long delayed
The law of kindness and most lovely memory
Rushed through his heart, building God's Heaven there.
And Abel rose in countless images
Designed of Love and painted on the air,
In childhood, in his youth, and last a man
To whom Cain cried, My Brother.

He kneeled and held the stones.
And all his tears
Were shouts in Heaven the while a thousand songs
Uprising from the Angels on the Earth
Mingled their music with celestial choirs
Beyond the stars in rapture.

And as he lay upon the fallen stones
Deep sleep came to his limbs.
And when he woke
The Angel of the Lord had left his side.

Yet in his heart's deliverance there shone
An image of the presence that had been.

"For I am with you," saith the Eternal Voice
"Yea, I am with you when ye know it not.
Ever am I with you."

And Cain uprose.

STORM

LAST night the unseen People of the Wind
Raved round the dwelling and in broken skies
Drove the grey clouds before them, in the strong wild rush
of their exulting freedom.
They piled the huge cloud-continents to rise
Like monstrous lands in undiscovered seas
Mocking the void before Creation.

The old house rocked and leaned.
And all the inner voices of the wind
Sighed round the casement.

I heard the grasp of many fingers laid
On shivering panes that shook beneath the cling
And followed in my mind that whistling rush
That has its image in the passages.

For there are many People of the Wind
And last night all the Spirits of the Rain
Were warring an old strife against Mankind.
For once in ages gone, as children know
A human being loved a Rain-maiden.
And by veiled magic words and his great love

He held her from her kindred of the Rain.
His was a spirit-wife whom none might know
For aught beside a woman wise and fair
Only the house became a well-known theme
For cottage firesides, and twilight tales
And folk would tell of dim, uncertain shapes
And voices singing in the falling rain.

So mused I on this legend of the years.
And even as I mused, their feet were on the stair
The lock gasped and a picture tapped the wall
They crept so stealthily . . .

The lot in life is naught, to love is all.
And when (the legend tells) the wan Undine
Went with her beauty and her soul to God
The People of the Wind and shifting Rain
Screamed round the home where she had lived and died
Mocking and angry at her love-gained soul.
(For it is known that all the outer life
The fairies, nixies, and the mermaidens
Have elfin life that withers when they die).

So all night long they bent with their wet weight
To huddled shapes the frenzy-ridden trees.

I heard them in the wind and rain last night
Lashing the windows with their long wet hair
And moaning at the key-hole.

ONE thrush singing at dawn
And the grey East flushing over.
A damask of dew on the lawn
Cobwebs drenched in the clover.

The grey clouds shift and whiten
The night wind falls and dies
The long beams lift and brighten
In the effulgent skies.

Light of the dawning Day
Listen thou, still and long
For what I cannot say
Is in that thrush's song.

THE CHILD

A CHILD'S face is the window of his soul
That yet untrammelled by the world's controul
Like some still pool upon a Summer's day
Ruffles to every wind that blows that way.

A child's face is a yet wide open door
That every year Life shuts a little more.
It stands wide thrown and to and fro pass free
Of his fresh thoughts, the white-robed company.

A child's face is a harp that silent stands
Waiting the touch of any passing hands
That chance to strike the clear obedient strings
Giving the captive melodies their wings.

A little pool that ruffles to the winds
An open door where each one entry finds
A stringed harp to answer song or hymn
So is a child's face to his every whim.

THE CAGED SKYLARK

THE skylark sang from its cage in the town
Of fallow and upland, the scene of its birth.
Shadows of clouds on the rolling Down
The flower-filled floor of the fragrant Earth.
Slanting silver of sun-lit rain
And the long, low line of the open plain.

Hearts city-pent in a waking dream
Turned to remembrance of wind-stirred trees.
Sheep-bells wattled beside the stream
And the huffle and push of a clover breeze.
Turned, and beholding the crowded street
Longed for the wideness of whispering wheat.

MARCH

MY heart brims over with my love
For those days in Spring
When blackbirds pair though trees are bare
And thrushes sing.

When russet buds are sharp and lean
But the building rooks
Fill the windy sky as they homeward fly
Over fields, over brooks.

The air may tell of the moistened earth
And winds be cold
But if nights are hard the hedges are starred
With Celandine's gold.

WITH A VOLUME OF ELIZABETHAN LOVE-LYRICS

I

HOW is this volume filled with sighs and moans
  Anguished of lovers in some wan despair!
Honeyed the phrase that for rebuke atones
  Each line descriptive of some fairest Fair.

If, in chance idleness thou turn'st thy gaze
  Lightly, it may be on these golden pages
Voices long silent shall renew their praise
  As birds make melody albeit in cages.

Doron, for thee shall find the hawthorn glade
  Where some poor swain by his kind stars forsaken
Wasted in solitude; or deep in shade
  Flora's clear singing may her Strephon waken.

Then shalt thou censure Time that long since killed
  All these fair gallants and elusive maidens.
Hid in Death's dateless night and long since chilled
  This, their desire attuned to such sweet cadence.

Yet Love endures for all Death's sombre will
Read, should'st thou doubt me in these chosen pages.
Here shall we joy to find these lovers still
Singing their love-songs to us down the Ages.

WITH A VOLUME OF ELIZABETHAN LOVE-LYRICS

II

AS leaves upon the willow tree
As grasses in the meadow
As water in the chafing sea
As night is full of shadow

As Heaven's clouds are filled with rain
An opal stone with omen
So doth this little book contain
Nothing but praise of Women.

Triumphant motive of the whole
Who reads it may discover
The ardent and protesting soul
Of many an old-time lover.

'Tis Stella's grace, or Celia's whims,
And now the charm of fair Dorinda.
Or be it some rebuke that seems
The path of Love no whit to hinder.

So page on page and all to laud
  Sweet Woman's beauty, wit, or power
Behold Love's quiver—in it stored
  All shafts the intriguing god may shower.

And deftly is this little book
  Of Cupid's world a type most seemly
For wheresoe'er you choose to look
  In both does Woman reign supremely.

THAT DEATH WHOSE TRUER NAME IS ONWARD

STRONG in the constancy of change
Unfurl thy spirit's wing
Soar on the homeless winds and range
Strenuous in suffering.

Blaze with thy naked hands the path
Which thou alone must find
And turn thine impotence of wrath
To courage of the mind.

Wrestle with angels. Fight and fall
And rise again to fight
Past tears are present strength and all
Depends upon thy might.

Death is not rest, there is no sleep
  For human sorrow there
The only way to cease to weep
  Is to learn how to bear.

CATHERINE LINTON

THERE be those who say that by night and day
There are some who may not sleep.
Though eyes be closed and limbs reposed
And the bed be narrow and deep.

They waver and whisper beyond the door
Who never may enter in
For they have their abode on the endless road
Of an unrepented sin.

It may be so, for this I know
When the night is thick with rain
In a whispering dress and a great distress
There is one who is here again.

When the wind blows shrill upon moor and hill
In the rush of the outer air
I hear the catch of a hand on the latch
And a footfall on the stair.

The moon rides high in a windy sky
The rain drips in the thatch
I listen to hear her step on the stair
Her hand upon the latch.

In the lift of the breeze in the ilex trees
She murmurs to me and sings.
And I must awake unto thoughts that ache
In a stress of remembered things.

"Thou art in small things great
Not small in any."

THE sea the sky and the wide-flung wind
A manifold truth relate
God sets the lesser the strong to bind
The weak to confound the great.

Of sacred seeds in our lives to plant
Are two that be dear to me
The allegiance of the working ant
And the virtue of the bee.

Shall Mankind claim a loftier sense
Desiring a goal to strive?
Than a will that renders subservience
And the power that holds the hive.

"For we have walked in unpleasant places."

THERE is a silence in the heart of night
That my heart knowing, dreads and understands.
It is all filled with many a hidden sight
And through its power new wrought are riven bands.
I feel in it the touch of buried hands
And eyes look on me that are long since dead
They pierce mine eyelids and their gaze demands
The memory of things oblit'rated.
They point and murmur, and to these is given
I know not wherefore, power to jibe and tell
They crouch towards me with white faces writhen
And whisper, Answer us, and is it well?
And some, And dost thou still believe in Heaven?
And some, There is no passage out of Hell.

SARUM CLOSE

JANUARY followed with glittering days
With primrose air and amethyst skies
And we two drove through the country ways
Of beech-wooded Wiltshire with deep-seeing eyes.

We shall remember how clear the days were
How far we could see on the Downs' wide curves.
We heard the rooks cawing high in the still air
By the grey-timbered mill where the broad river swerves.

The sickle-shaped roads led us on and away
By the clustering villages thatched and neat
Where round-headed children looked up from their play
And pollarded lime-trees border the street.

And the square-towered churches, which pleased us the best?
Was it Woodford or Durnford, we might not decide—
Or the more blessèd Bemerton, or of the rest
That grey in the shelter of elms we descried?

The clear waters guided us well as they flow
By the withy-bed meadows and little plank bridges
Where poplars are planted to stand in a row
And the water-rat drops from the marshy green sedges.

The sun every night set in wonders anew
In purple and gold he sank down from on high
While the magic of twilight perceptibly grew
And scattered its wet silver over the sky.

White-roaded Wiltshire, your water-fed ways
Your cloud-shadowed Down where the wild plover cries
We two shall remember those January days
When we drove through your by-ways with deep-seeing eyes.

WITH A VOLUME OF THE TEMPLE

THE quiet thought and gentle prayer
That pious Herbert so long dead
Conceived remote from worldly care
Are in this volume cherished.

And living yet they burn and glow
Fulfilled with a celestial fire
So clearly now as long ago
When he abode beneath the spire.

In Bemerton's sequestered shade
By Avon's emerald water meadows
His life a sanctuary made
Remote from courtly shows and shadows.

And as the spire to Heaven above
Uprears a grey majestic finger
So he would rise to Heaven's love
Nor knew with meaner joys to linger.

These are the prayers of long ago
Amid a life of grateful leisure
My child, that I would have you know.
And knowing, find in these a treasure.

ECHO

HOW see you Echo? When she calls I see
Her pale face looking down through some great tree
Whose world of green is like a moving sea
That shells re-echo.

I see her with a white face like a mask
That vanishes to come again, damask
Her cheek, but deeply pale,
Her eyes are green
With a silver sheen
And she mocks the thing you ask.

"O Echo!" (hear the children calling) "are you there?"

"Where? . . ."

When the wind blows over the hill
She hides with a vagrant will
And call you may loud and call you may long
She lays finger on lip when the winds are strong
For all your pains she is still.

But when young plants spring and the chiff-chaffs sing
And the scarlet capped woodpecker flies through the vale
She is out all day
Through the fragrant May
To babble and tattle her Yea and Nay.

"O Echo!" (still the children call) "where are you? where?"

"Air. . . ."

PSYCHE

I WAS a tardy insect once
And moved in heaving throes.
Where e'er I went I made a rent
And spoiled my garden rose.
But came a voice that said: Rejoice
Arise.—And I arose.

I passed through many a curious change
All witless of the goal
To which the hand that had command
Did all my ways controul.
Now gilt and fair and light as air
I fly, a ransomed soul.

Now know I well the Summer flowers
And why the linnet sings
But best of all my clumsy crawl
Is changed for painted wings.
And shall not Death be fuller breath
To yet undreamed of things?

"I will sing as doth behove
Hymns in praise of what I love."

I KNOW a dingle in a leafy wood
Filled with the fragrance of the perfect May.
Here the grey trees for centuries have stood
And Spring wreathes garlands on them new and gay.
Is there a moment of the shining day
Fairer than this which sees the rising sun
Slant the pale yellow of his early ray
On dew-drenched fallows, and the fine threads spun
By long-legged spinners in the clefts of trees
Float their light gossamer upon the breeze?
Here leaps the limber-footed listening hare.
And here the Cuckoo, blithe and debonair
Calls from the willows in the water leas
Remote, elusive, a thin tongue of air.

" Set thine heart as a watchman upon a tower. For there is no man that shall be truer unto thee than it."

TO my soul's mandate I would still be true
It is my purpose to advance the right.
To hold it strongly and at God's knees sue
For timely furtherance upon the fight.
O! I would pierce beyond this mortal sight
And dwell in kinship with the blest and free
Whose lives renewed and shown celestial bright
Ever praise God, and more abundantly.
My feet go painfully, but in my heart
I have sure knowledge of predestined joy.
Let me but turn unto that inward part
That holds my freedom from the world's annoy.
That holds my freedom, let these words be graven.
So may I come at my desirëd haven.

AMONG THE WILLOWS

HIGH on the uplands a belt of trees
Stretches a line by the winter corn
Thick with the scent of the blossoming thorn
Zephyr by zephyr and breeze by breeze.

The flowerhead bends to the weight of the bee.
And down in the valley by thicket and hedge
The marigold shines in the deepening sedge
Flower by flower and tree by tree.

Spirit of shadowing cloud and gleam
Breathe to the heart of the weary town
Of winding water and windy Down
Willow by willow and stream by stream.

THE BUTTERFLY'S SONG

ONCE I heard a skylark say
"Butterflies live for a day
Yet herein the human mind
Symbol of a soul doth find."

Then he rose on joyous wing
Other of God's works to sing.
Till he soon was but a voice
That to hear was to rejoice.

So I fluttered on my way
Through the shining Summer day
Flying with my saffron lover
Over fields of nodding clover.

Sometimes with my jewelled wings
Poised in aërial hoverings.
Or again with slender feet
Folded round the meadow-sweet.

Once I moved with heaving shrink
Two slow feet to every link.
Now I flit, I fly, I quiver
Over garden, over river.

From a shrouded chrysalis
Pass I to my wingëd bliss.
In my story is it strange
Man should read, not Death but Change?

THE DIMITY ROOM

I SING the haven of a chosen room
Imaged in brightness.
No corner is there that may harbour gloom
In Dimity's whiteness.

Would you be peaceful? Here you may find dreams
Asleep or waking
Silver in moonlight or those ruddier beams
When dawn is breaking.

The woodcut on the wainscote hanging high
In friendship given
Telling of kine against an evening sky
Being homeward driven.

And in the book shelves upon each side ranging
The Immortals stand
Their even ranks increasing but not changing
Close to the hand.

The fire-light winks upon their vellum covers
And golden tracing
Weaving a dancing chain that climbs and hovers
Gloom with gleam lacing.

Comfort capacious in the window seat
And room to spare
A corner-cupboard, and to be complete
The winged armchair.

And here the Poets mark you, as of old
(Thumbed back and front)
Ready to change for us Life's lead to gold
Chaucer to Blunt.

So stands the Dimity. A faulty metre?
A slender theme?
Yet unto me few others could be sweeter
Or worthier seem.

And you my Critic, who would read severely
Ere you reprove me
Judge is it worth your scorn? I write it merely
For those who love me.

Enough if these among Time's gathering shrouds
The Past defining
May smile to read of what was once at Clouds
A silver lining.

ENVOY TO VILLAGE NOTES

DEEP in the verdure of the water meads
Where the grey willow slants across the brook
The moor hen hides, and in the chafing reeds
Makes her a sheltered nook.

The skylark mounting on his viewless stair
To swell the shrill voiced clamour of a throng
High o'er the springing wheat gives the wide air
The rapture of his song.

The river wanders round the alder stems
And narrowed to the sluice-gate hurries by
Holding and shattering to a thousand gems
The brightness of the sky.

And while the village children on the leas
Gather the cowslip and the lady's-smock
From far off sounds upon the evening breeze
The many-voiced flock.

Here may I dwell content. And when the day
  Dawns that shall recognize thy task complete
Thou too, from busy crowds shalt turn away
  To some sublime retreat.

And in companionship of quiet things
  Live with the changes of the earth and sky
Where on the Downs with free untiring wings
  The plovers wheel and cry.

WITH THE BOOK OF PEACE

MOTHER, I dedicate this book to thee.
And I would wish that all through it may know
How great thy teaching was, how wide the flow
Of love thou gav'st thy child unceasingly.
Thy strong hands led me to the eternal springs
And like the grain on Hugh of Lincoln's lip
Thy spirit bids me praise the highest things
And dwells beside me in close fellowship.
Then like a pilgrim comes my love to thee
With songs immortal held within his scrip.

MOON MAGIC

ONE day when Father and I had been
To sell our sheep at Berwick Green
We reached the farm house late at night
A great moon rising round and bright.

Her strange beam shed on all around
Bewitched the trees and streams and ground.
Changing the willows beyond the stacks
To little old men with crouching backs.

To-day the sun was shining plain
They all were pollarded willows again.
But at night—do you believe they're trees?
They're little old men with twisted knees.

"To worthily defend the trust of trusts
Life from the Ever-living."

LIFE POTENTIAL

ABIDES the hidden human thing
On the shore of Time's great sea.
Symbol and foreshadowing
Of Man, and of what Man may be.

The mother-spirit wakes to feel
Rotation of the eternal wheel.
And all the day she shapes the thing
To Nature's secret ordering.

There is no power may do her wrong
In this she moves secure and strong.
Her eyes see visions, in her sight
Fields of inestimable light.

The Past is with her. In her ears
The wordless wisdom of the years.
Writ in her heart is the decree
Of an unfailing ministry.

Abides the hidden human thing
On the shore of Time's great sea.
Symbol and foreshadowing
Of Man, and of what Man may be.

WOULD that Man's heart might deal more justly, God
To these high ordinances still be true.
Yet hath he other selves whose beck and nod
Behold he following, must reap or rue.
(There is an ever-growing debt long due
To all we venerate within our soul
And for contempt of this thy strength we sue
That patience hold us, and a wise controul.)
Yet never, Lord, should Man to thee repeat
The feeble murmur and the servile groan
That rises daily to thy mercy seat
Nor should he, *pardie*, for his sins atone
By supplication. For his erring feet
Thou leav'st unguided, and he walks alone.

SOMETIMES our life is so set round with spears
That idly sorrowing we grieve and fret.
Or with the senses numbed, we shed no tears
Yet start from sleep with eyelids chilled and wet.
Then may we know that in our dreams we yet
Parley with pleasure from our lives apart
And all the happiness our soul may get
Lies in the deepening of a strenuous heart.

Yet as the albatross with wide-set wings
Heeds not the onslaught of the wind-swept spray
So may the spirit win to those far things
Whose light illumines an immortal Day.
Whose light upholden in the hand of Fate
Bids us to stand, and in ourselves be great.

SANTA CHIARA

MY daughter of a tender age
I trace thy name upon this page
That thou, in years when thou shalt grow
The story of thy saint may'st know.

Giotto, on a convent wall
Designed her image fair and tall.
Upon her brow he set Faith's stamp
And in her hands she holds a lamp.

For *Clare* means Light, and she who bore
Thy name long since on southern shore
Beheld God's likeness ere she died.
And waking, she was satisfied.

It may be in those later days
When Life confronts with divers ways
When heart may tire, or footstep faint
Thou shalt recall thy patron saint.

And with her lamp within thine heart
Behold once more the chosen part.
And straightway in thine inmost feel
Renewed desire for heavenly zeal.

OF TREES

WINTER Willow is ruddy red
Pollarded in the withe-bed.
Summer Willow is green and grey
Bending white on a windy day.

Autumn Beech is a stately creature
Well she made her pact with Nature
While she casts her russet gown
She wears her new buds, sharp and brown.

If Birch beside the Broom be found
Her satin is the more renown'd.
And yet of seasonable trees
There is a better one than these.

For Chestnut goes to meet the spring
While Oak and Ash are lingering.
He holds his boughs when Winter 's by
Like altar candles to the sky.

He makes it his to be the first
The East may blow, his bonds must burst.
And leader of the budding rout
In one green stride the Chestnut 's out.

JULY

THE wind is in the willows, they are white beneath the breeze
And the river rushes rustle as they grow.
The skimming swifts and swallows dip and sweep beneath the trees
Where the white-flowered water-weeds blow.
At the foot of leaning poplars bowing grey against the blue
The quiet sheep are feeding newly shorn
And among the standing barley shot with poppies through and through
The land-rail is craking in the corn.

All day the doves are calling and the rose is on the hedge
Where the black-berried bryonies stray.
The yellow flower-de-luce is growing tall among the sedge
Where the clover was crimson in the hay.
O! the sounds and scents of summer blowing free upon the breeze
The honeysuckle fashioned like a horn
And the fragrance of the elder in a dusk of stirring trees.
And the night-jar churring on the thorn.

"And from the osiers in the river-meaas
Hear the sedge-warbler chiding in the reeds. . . ."

SUMMER DUSK

THE day rose shining at his radiant birth
He breathes yet warmly from the darkening Earth
Now his long shroud is on the fields and trees
And ghosts of honeysuckle walk the breeze.

The bats that hidden to the rafters cling
Cleave the grey shadows on a soundless wing
And lost in tussock of the wayside grasses
Over the road the timid shrew-mouse passes.

Soon shall we follow on his curving flight
The white owl mousing in the failing light
And from the osiers shalt thou hear ere long
Hour upon hour of the sedge-warbler's song.

RAIN IN SUMMER

SHEAVED is the yellow corn, the roads are dust
Weeds by the trodden ways are burnt and brown
Now Summer's poppy-scarlet cloak lies thrown
Wide over all the land, a sun-dried crust.
Surely a thirsty earth abhors each thrust
Dealt her by sun-spears that have borne her down
And well-nigh withered all her leafy crown
Through these last shining days of dew-fed trust?

But now the swallows with a restless ease
Brush the close meadow grass in swerving flight.
A late wind creeps among the shadowy trees
And clouds lie massed against an amber light.
The skies lean low that were a vast blue plain. . .
Blinding the landscape falls the thick white rain.

JUNE IN LONDON

PAN pipes to us among the reeds and trees
In the long grass he sounds his slender oat.
Might but our senses hold the hidden note
All else were hush'd to hear its ecstasies.
We should have done with other thoughts save these
And the frail purpose of our days would float
Lightly and leisurely as drifts a boat
Upborne and rudderless on summer seas.

But there is round us an illusive day
Ever the world is full of wildering sound.
Our very pastimes are a labour, yea
Though Dryads beckon to a leafy ground.
Our hearts lie holden in a sombre creed
Though great Pan pipe to us, how should we heed?

FOLLOW THE GLEAM

FOLLOW, O! follow, o'er valley and hollow
The sun is over the rim!
The world is anew and the quivering dew
Is alight with the vision of him.
Now up and away! for the spirit of day
Fills the world as with wine, to the brim.

I sing the glory of the Dawn.
Aurora moves clad opalwise
Of thousand hues her robe of lawn
Gold-stitched like lapis lazulies.

STAND STILL IN THE LIGHT

REST, now rest for the travail oppressed
The moonlight sleeps on the hill
Shadows abound on the misty ground
Even the leaves are still.
The soul's increase and the mind's release
Silence—for whoso will.

I sing the marvel of the Earth.
Semele moves in argent skies
And those who ponder find no dearth
In her sufficing mysteries.

THE BODY SPEAKETH UNTO THE SOUL

I KNOW, my Soul, had I appraised thee more
Thou sovereign treasure of a mortal heart
I should find solace in some kindlier score
Of all I owe to thy diviner part.
Yea, I might comfort me, but hot tears start
For on a sudden in my heart is seen
Life's empty jugglery, the shifting mart
Where grace is bartered for the might have been.
Where all we cling to like a wind-tossed plank
Serves but to keep us from the engulfing main
And holding fast have but ourselves to thank
Should we escape submersion in our pain.
O! we are simple. Life, the mountebank
Seeks but to cheat us. We must work again.

THE SOUL MAKETH ANSWER UNTO THE BODY

YEA, round our days in immemorial toil
Here is found treasure that shall not decay.
Plant fallen sanctities in kindly soil
These shall reward thee on a certain day.
Thou shalt find justice in some ampler way
So thou be vigilant to bear each load.
God knows if we be patient we shall say
It was a strenuous but glorious road.
Then shall we compass all our hearts were fain
If to the end we prove stability
Seeking such strength as shall abound again
So tread we sure-foot when we come to die.
Others have dwell'd here; ay, and made abode
And shall not we do bravely, thou and I?

INDIAN SUNSET

THE sun hangs low in a fiery haze
Barring the heavens with gold.
A crimson sphere is the monarch of days
And the moon leans sharp and cold.
The moon leans sharp and cold, and it seems
As the great stars spear the night
A spirit 's abroad on the breathing Earth
A spirit that owes an enchanted birth
To the union of darkness and light.

It moves in the green of the standing corn
And throbs in the falling dusk.
It breathes in the shadow and with it is borne
The odour of rose and musk.
The odour of sandal, and musk, and balm
And from prickly and pulpous thorns
The clamouring crickets, hushed through the noon
Fill the quivering air, while a lavender moon
Clips the deepening blue in her horns.

RICHARD JEFFERIES

HE, to declare the courage of his heart
Wrote in its blood, it seems that all might know
One soul had flinch'd not from the searing smart
Of Man's captivity to joy and woe.
Life's loneliness, and brilliancies of hope
Far peaks of pleasure, and deep gulfs of pain
Yet wrought he, furthering his soul's wide scope
So even his agony became his gain.

Thus did he manifest the God in man
When most his spirit cried "There is no God."
Thus did his soul's eye gloriously scan
Heights more uplifted than his footstep trod.
He led his brethren to a fertile land
Seeking for beauty on an ampler wing
And shall not such an heart, like Moses' wand
Make of the barren rocks a quenchless spring?

YAMA, THE ASSEMBLER OF MEN

AS a young child that all night long
Hath felt the formless fear of night
And terror's hand supremely strong
Forbids that he may tell his fright

So are there some whose haft of life
(Albeit with ivories inlaid)
Holds none the less some shrewder knife
That on their inmost whets its blade.

And as the child awaking sees
Phantastic visions in the air
So these maintain their silences
With worlds untold within their care.

Yet in the morning when the child
Wanders at will by field and lawn
He laughs to find all unfulfilled
The fear that went before the dawn.

So these, when Heaven shall overflow
Shall sing for pure soul-joy because
Christ in his hand shall take their woe.
And they shall say "how small it was."

"But if we could hear and see this vision
Were it not He?"

SUNSET IN NOVEMBER

NOW in the hour of falling Night
While all the West in radiance glows
And tree and stream and failing light
Join in the vespers of repose

While yet the outline of the wood
Is dark upon the fading hill
Here let us stand as once we stood
Beside the thunder of the mill.

And with a mind for quiet things
Have knowledge of the heron's flight
In lift and droop of measured wings
Pass onward, slowly down the night.

And while the glow on field and tree
Shows russet woods a ruddier brown
And we may guess but barely see
The long white road across the Down

Yea, while the vapours from the ground
  Rise as from altars of the blest
Our souls shall drink of sight and sound
  And take their fill of Nature's rest.

For there are moments far apart
  From all the ways our feet have trod
When holding commune in her heart
  We know the peace that is of God.

THE RAINBOW

SHOW me thy light O God, I need a guide
No graven stone is there to mark Life's way.
Yea, fire at eventide and cloud by day
Go thou before me for the world is wide
And Death sits watching on the other side.
No power but thine is there to say him Nay
And though my heart and erring mind may stray
My soul would wholly in thy strength abide.

Yet doubts go with me. And swift crafty fears
Wind round my feet their cold and venomous lies
They bind the spirit, and they seal mine ears
Hiding thy hills from mine uplifted eyes.
Yet show me light, and with my very tears
I'll build a rainbow that shall span the skies.

THREE COUNTRY POEMS IN THE WILTSHIRE DIALECT

THE FIRE O' LOGS

THE builders of the wolden days
They found small stint and little dearth
Teäke two from out their goodly ways
The wide-span walls and open hearth.
The hearth where all mid gather round
Set square wi' shining metal dogs
That hold wi' hands of iron bands
Their burden o' the bleäzen logs.
No, no. I hold to what I own
There 's naught to beät the hearth o' stone.

For here the fleämes do leap and throw
Their forkëd antlers, fierce and tall
And chase their chequered underglow
All rosy on the white-washed wall.
And here the sooty chimney-back
Do show the seäms of olden brick
Wi' comely flaw that Time mid draw
Where sudden sparks fly fast and thick.
No, no. They don't know what they says
The folk that bleäme the wolden ways.

For here 's the seat beside the fire
Where some mid sit and teäke their beer.

And those that come in mean attire
Are warmed alike, and find good cheer.
And here the carrier from the road
Looks in, and ventures "Who's to go?"
And turns his feäce towards the bleäze
And stamps his girt boots free from snow.
"Come in, come in. What news to-night
Yes, yes—the fire 's a goodly sight."

And here from logs of hewen wood
There pipes the sound o' winds they knew
When they were standen tall and good
A-wrastlen wi' the storms that blew.
And clear to eyes that come to see
Beyond the pleäce where most do get
They shed once more the glowen store
Of summer suns long since a-set.
Zoo I do hold there 's none so good
'S the fire, that 's piled wi' logs o' wood.

JACK O' LANTERN

WHEN Lady-Day one year we moved
To leave the house we dearly loved
We packed our things and all our ware
A toweren waggon-load of gear
And off we started down the road
With two strong mares to draw the load.
But having neither cage nor bin
To put our wing-clipped Jackdaw in
Father, he fetch'd our lantern out
And that 's what made the folk to shout—

"Why there goes Jack o' Lantern!
We've heerd of Jack o' Lantern
But never thought to see 'un—No!
Not see a Jack o' Lantern."

Dear, what a sight it were!—the chairs
Were corded to the sides in pairs.
The clock sewn up in canvas bag
Was stitched agin' the sofa lag.
The chest of drawers stuffed fit to crack
Was wedged in 'long with Father's sack.
Tables, with all their lags in air
Made room for boxes and to spare.

While pots and pans and tins and pails
Went swingen on a score of nails—

Along of Jack o' Lantern
And "look at Jack o' Lantern"
The mothers to the children cry
"Come out! see Jack o' Lantern."

And now the Time be flyen fast.
But often looken down the Past
I mind me of the home we left
Familiar rooms o' life bereft.
The empty walls, the wide-flung sash
The hearth all thick wi' last night's ash.
I knew to Mother it were pain
To think she'd never see 't again.
And yet wi' eyes but barely dry
She smiled to hear the children cry—

"O! look at Jack o' Lantern!
We've heerd of Jack o' Lantern
But never thought to see 'un—No!
A proper Jack o' Lantern."

THE BEE AND THE BUTTERFLY

A dialogue between two cottage maidens.

Carry. Why Fanny! I be pleased to see thee!
Do seem like months since I've been wi' thee!
Come in, my dear, and sit ye down
You looks so peärt 's a new half-crown!

Fanny. Well Carry, how are you, my dear?
You look so smiling and so fair.
(O, that 's new you've got on, my girl—
I wish my hair had got your curl!)
But I can't stop too long to-day
For mother told me not to stay
She said as I'd my "afternoon"
That she would like me back home soon.
Well, how are you sin' I've been gone?
Why, beänt you dull here all alone?
O! dear O! dear what should I do
If I had got to do as you!
Keep home for father and for brothers
Take all the trouble same as mothers

And clean the floors and cook the food
O my dear Carry, you *are* good!
I know I would 'n change wi' several.
Why don't you take a place as "general"?
Of course the work is rather rough
But you can say you've had enough
And slur the work and make a scurry
And say you're always in a hurry
With this to do and that to follow
And here a call and there a holloa.
So then you say (for that 's the card)
"You must have help, the work 's too hard."
I tell 'e it 's the wiser plan
The difference now that we've got Ann!

Carry. O! Fanny, sure it tidden right
To talk so keerless and so light. . . .

Fanny. Beänt Carry, that I mean I shirk
But it just helps, look, with the work.
And sometimes, well now, like to-day
She does my work while I'm away.

Carry. I'm vexed to hear you talk like this
Making an aim of idleness.
As if the only thought of work
Was how little to do and how much to shirk.
Why, Fanny, don't you know, my dear
We all of us must work down here?

And beänt because we're ordered to
But what we know we ought to do.
My Granny often used to say
"While you are young don't waste a day
And come the season you are old
You 'll find your young days marked in gold."

Fanny. Of course that 's very good advice
But holidays are very nice.
And if there 's one to do your work
I don't see why you shouldn' shirk.

Carry. That 's just where you don't understand.
A willing heart 's a willing hand
And Mother often used to say
"If you should ever go away
And leave the home where you were bred
To earn an honest board and bed
Don't learn those good-for-nothing tricks
That only leave you in a fix.
Shun careless ways and mend your clothes
And then, she'd say, you may suppose
There won't be no one to cast blame on 'e
And none as love 'e to be shamed on 'e."

Fanny. O dear, you drive me out o' patience
With all your wonderful relations!
A mother who says this and that
And Gran'mer who 's got something pat

Who 's taught you all your careful ways
And how to spend your useful days.
However you do mind such things!
They 'd leave my head same 's they 'd got wings.

Carry. But look, 'tis best to keep one tidy
Than careless in one 's ways, and slidy?
And it 's no good your saying NO
For I'm quite certain that 'tis so.

Fanny. But surely Carry, you're not talking
You'd sooner work than go out walking?

Carry. N—no, no, not that, ye silly Fanny
But each has got a time; and Granny . . . .

Fanny. O dear, dear, dear, I'm fairly sick on't!
And your old granny, why you're crazed on't!
I can't so much 's put in my nose
To pass the day, or show my clothes
Than there you draw down such a face
And make it out a serious case.
Why don't you hold a school as teacher?
I would, an' I were such a preacher!

Carry. I didn't mean, my dear, to lecture
But now, your mother, don't she 'spect yer?
I thought I heard you say as how
You couldn' stop to talk, just now?

Fanny. Well, I must just put up wi' a scold.
And there! I'm sure when I am old
I won't lead young folk such a life
As others do, to breed a strife.
It seems in one way or another
Folk interfere and fuss and bother
And no one thinks the other's right
And all's a bickering and a fight.
If one thinks so, he's not content
To let the other go his bent.
O no! but he must up and struggle
And bring the whole thing to a muggle
With *don't do that* and *you're wrong there*
And *if I were you.* Well, I declare
It would be better for us all
If no one interfered at all!

Carry. And this, I take it's at your mother?
I can't help laughing at your bother!
Fanny, to go and make a stir
And raise your wisdom against her.
I think old people see so clear!
I never knew un interfere
And I regret a many times . . . .

Fanny. O! old folk with their saws and rhymes!
I'm sure, and I've a often said
Most would be glad when they be dead.

So cross, and full of aches and ire
Grumbling, and taking up the fire. . . .

Carry. O Fanny! you 'most make me shiver!
Your heart must be so cold 's the river
To speak of old folk in such tones
Old folk wi' weary hearts and bones
Who've gone through so much care and strife
And all the sorriments of life.
To speak like *that*. . . .

Fanny. I shouldn' have said it; there, I know it.
But what 's out and said, you can't undo it.

Carry. But O my dear . . . . such things . . . . how can 'e?
I wouldn' ha' thought it of 'e, Fanny.

Fanny. I've said I'm sorry for it—there—
Now do forget it, there 's a dear.
I know my thoughts should go in clogs
But they're out s'quick, why! just like frogs.

Carry. That 's it. And look, it 's more than trick
Fanny, you be so terrible quick.
To meet life how will you be able?
D'hurt me to see you so unstable.

Fanny. Well now, I think you might be quiet
Making such a fuss and such a riot!

I've said a score o' times I'm sorry
And now that beänt sufficient for 'e!

Carry. I didn't mean to seem so cross
But some day when you've had a loss
Fanny, such words will turn like spears
And *they* won't melt for all your tears.
Come now, sit down, and tell me whether. . . .

Fanny. O! I've a hat with such a feather!
I bought 'at Mere, that is the shape
And trimmed un up to match my cape.
I tell 'e it do make folk stare!
'Specially when I've curled my hair.

Carry. And that reminds me, Fanny sure
I noticed that fine cape o' your!
Whatever made ye buy it so gay?
And in that shower yesterday!

Fanny. Why? 'Cause I can't stand browns and greys
Do we have nought but stormy days?
And don't you fancy pink . . . . and . . . . crimson?
You are a strange girl, Caroline Sim'son!

Carry. Beänt I don't like un well enough
But not when I do buy my stuff.
As soon as I be in the shop
To pick a skirt, or chose a top

I takes un up and feels the grain
To see if it 'ull stan' the rain.
It 's not I don't like braid and jet
But there! they're nothing when they're wet.

Fanny. I take it as a mighty blessing
I see no weather when I'm dressing!
For me, my skies are always blue
Ceppen of course, when I'm wet through.

Carry. That 's it, and where 's the good o' buying
A stuff that wets and spoils in drying?
No. Take my word for't, browns and greys
Look neatest on the stormy days!

Fanny. Well, if you're not going in for show
You'll never have a lover, No!
No more you won't, and take my word for't!
They likes to see maids neat and dressed smart.
With here and there a frill or two
A bit of lace, or bow of blue.

Carry. And there you go, up in a minit
As fiery 's if I were agin it!
Of course I like to look my best
And trim and neat and pretty drest.
But not to make the lovers follow.
I'll not stand on a hill and holloa
And put up feathers in my hat

To make un say "Why, look at that!"
And trapse adown the village street
To see how many folk I meet!
There 's better things than that I'm sure
And I'd not choose to have a score
Of lovers just to loaf and gape
At pretty shawl, or hat, or cape.

Fanny. Dear sakes! but you're a strange girl, Carry.
Do you mean you don't think to marry?

Carry. And be you Fanny, so afraid
My dear, of biding an old maid
That you'll do anything to catch
A husband, just to make a match?
It 's you will find, I fear, some day
The ones that liked to see you gay
And dressed up fine and full of chatter
As husbands, are a different matter.
They're not the ones to be so cheery
When you are over-worked and weary
They'll want their dinner warm and cosy
The children tidy, clean, and rosy.
There'll be no hats to be admired
When they come home from work and tired.
No, no! you wait till your sweet-heart
Do love you for your kindly heart
And clever hands, and cheerful ways,
Then you may trust to what he says.

Fanny. Well, if you're done, I think I'm going
Mother will have her something saying
And I suppose I must sit through
Another sermon, number two. . . .
I wish, my dear, that I could be
The more like you, or you like me.
Then I'd be sensible and stiff
And we should never have a tiff
Or you'd buy pretty shawls and capes
And join in all my scolds and scrapes.
Well! next time that we meet to chatter
We'll make a lovely din and clatter!
But let the talk be more my choosing.
I warrant 'twill be more amusing.

Carry. And now she 's gone, I'm almost sad
To think how sharp a talk we've had.
For since we played adown the street
We've always loved to chat and meet.
But somehow, since we're maidens growed
We seem to tread a different road.
She holds her cares as lightly new
As gossamers their thread of dew
And takes her joys with less of thinking
Than fowls look upward after drinking.
She has a gayer time than me
Yet I can't do the same as she.
No, we shall look with even eyes
When Bees keep house with Butterflies.

"Long months of peace, if such bold word accord
With any promises of human life."

THE WATERS OF LIFE

THY life shall liken to some brimming stream
That flowing, winds among the curves of Earth
Yet holds the Heavens in immemorial change
From dawn to day, from noon to deepening dusk.
When stars un-numbered in the dome of night
Shine out, spear-pointed in the purple skies.
Thy life shall hold them all
The moon, the stars.

And by the banks the lesser grasses love
The Waters of thy Life shall feed the flowers
Growing in loveliness beside the reeds
The reeds forever whispering to the stream.
Shall lap and murmur by the slender stems
And linger by the wide and glistening leaves.
Thy life shall know them all
The reeds, the flowers.

And in the depth of some sequestered shade
By hollow rocks and murmuring waterfalls
The Lotus lilies of thy thoughts shall grow
Holding their chalice to the stainless dew.
And in the sunset-coloured waters there
The whirl of midges at their myriad play
Shall bring the wonder of the swallow's flight.
Or some soft splash with ever-widening rings.
  Thy life shall love them all
  The sounds, the colours.

And in the silence of the frozen night
When Earth lies holden in the Winter's strength
And now the rushes, crisped and sere and brown
Rustle and chafe among the whitened sedge
The Waters of thy Life shall count their joy
The mightiest and the rarest and the best
When they in all the dark blue of their steel
May catch the glittering eye-lash of the Moon.
  Thy life shall feel it all
  But hold the best.

And in the fragrance of the Summer night
When moths hold revel by the glow-worm bank
And bats, black blades against the shadowy sky
Flit like the spirits of dead earth-bound thoughts
Winged with a soundless speed. . . . . .
And birds, with notes like water underground
Conspire in multitudinous harmony. . .

Then shall each current, each translucent wave
Hold, rest, and stay them in an infinite Peace
To see One walking in the whiteness there.

The Waters of thy Life shall reach the Sea.

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